

# *The* AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

JULY, 1945

20 CENTS



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# MOSTLY PERSONAL

By JOHN T. BARTLETT, Co-Publisher



John T. Bartlett

Publishers have discovered during World War II the enormous market for books in drug store and chain outlets. Roy J. Snell's article, "Juvenile Pulp Books" (page 12), sketches a professional writer's approach to one section of this market. "Little White Fox and His Arctic Friends" was Roy Snell's first published book (1916); it was based on a year the author had

spent in charge of the Wales reindeer herd on Behring Straits. Born in Missouri (1878), Mr. Snell holds degrees from Wheaton College, Chicago Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago. Whitman (Racine) and Donahue (Chicago) are the publishers for whom he has done juvenile pulp books.

During a development period, such flat prices as Mr. Snell mentions may be necessary. However, as competition becomes greater and as the relationship of good writing to sales is appreciated more, I expect a royalty basis cutting the writer in for a much larger share of returns will become general. I learned the other day that the royalty paid by Dell on its very popular line of 25c pocket-size books is about 1c a book. Like other 25-cent books, Dell's 25-cent sellers are largely reprints.

Carol Taylor, a *New York World-Telegram* feature writer, described Betsy Talbot Blackwell, editor-in-chief of *Mademoiselle*, as "young and pert, modern as a buzz bomb . . . a career girl of the provocative, eye-filling type seldom seen outside a Rosalind Russell movie." Mrs. Blackwell's office is something out of a movie, too. "The furniture is Louis XV. There are gold leaf mirrors and the pink crystal chandeliers came 'from a palace in Vienna.' Her desk is olive green and graceful (the kind you'd expect to see in a boudoir) and her telephone table is Poudreuse inlaid with mother of pearl. The walls and rug are olive green and the drapes are deep rose."

Educated at convent school, her mother a stylist, her father a newspaperman and playwright, Mrs. Blackwell found her first full-time job on a fashion magazine, *Charm*. When S. & S. established *Mademoiselle*, she became fashion editor. Aimed at a new market, between the luxury magazines emphasizing Paris fashions, and the mass women's magazines giving little attention to dress, *Mademoiselle* became a great publishing success, the indispensable guide of co-eds and white-collar girls.

Mrs. Blackwell (who has a son at Andover, a step-daughter in the WACS) finds it much easier to buy good art than good manuscripts, considers writing "the hardest way to make a living, the rarest talent." She buys considerable free-lance material—short stories, articles, humorous sketches, cartoons.

Writing the decision of the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in the *Esquire* case, Justice Arnold declared it was "inconceivable" that Congress intended to delegate to any administrative official "the power first to determine what is good for the public to read and then to force compliance with his ideas by putting editors who do not follow them at a competitive disadvantage." Postmaster-General Walker's attempt to impose a censorship on American publications comes to an ignominious end. We can all breathe more easily. In the concluding phases of the case, the Authors League of America, Curtis Publishing Co., *Readers Digest*, American Newspaper Publishers Association, and the American Civil Liberties Union, entered pleas in support of *Esquire*.

It seems fairly certain there will be no further paper cuts, but larger magazine allotments are not likely for some months. . . Duane Rimel ("It Pays To Rewrite") is an Idaho man. . . Several of the articles which Celia Darlington (page 20) prepared in collaboration have appeared in *Sea*, Los Angeles; she is a California writer. . . E. Hoffman Price also lives in California. He wrote "The Adventure Story" for the August, 1944, A. & J., "Act The Part" for the November, 1944, issue. . . William W. Pratt, whose articles on verse have been so popular, has done another for us, already in type, "Stand On Your Metric Feet!" It will be published in an early issue. . . Net paid circulation of *The Author & Journalist* is the highest in its history.

"Uniform Into Bathrobe," this issue, is intended principally for those hundreds of A. & J. readers who will be returning to civilian life from military service. (War worker-writers are in much the same case.) Who's Who lists 10 books by Nard Jones, whose "Swift Flows The River," 1940, was a best-seller. Born in Seattle in 1904, he graduated from Whitman College, edited *Pacific Motor Boat* from 1926 to 1940. He holds the rank of Lt. Commander in the U.S.N.R.

(Continued on Page 19)

## THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

Founded, 1916, by Willard E. Hawkins

Published Monthly at  
1837 Champa Street, Denver 2, Colorado

John T. and Margaret A. Bartlett, Editors  
and Publishers

David Raffelock, Associate Editor  
The Student Writer Department, Conducted by  
Willard E. Hawkins

Entered as second-class matter, April 21, 1916, at the Post Office at Denver, Colorado, under the act of March 3, 1879. All rights reserved by Author & Journalist Publishing Co. Printed in the U. S. A.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$2 per year, in advance; Canada and Foreign, \$2.50. Single copies, 20c. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Vol. XXX

JULY, 1945

No. 7

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# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

July, 1945

## RESEARCH: HOW AND WHAT FOR?

... By E. HOFFMAN PRICE



E. Hoffman Price

Research is getting facts; applied to fictioneering, it is the means of obtaining verisimilitude, since no writer, regardless of personal experience, can possibly have an intimate knowledge of all the topics he must include as incidentals to his major backgrounds.

When an author does not know what he is talking about, even the reader who is no better informed will sense that the writer has faked; and while research is not a cure-all, it helps avoid the full horror of unauthenticated writing, of which there is entirely too much. Editors, poor devils, have to buy something, and no editor can possibly be so versatile as to smell out every boner in every MS.

In the first yarn I sold *Adventure*, an important twist depended on an impostor's reaction to a bottle of rare Spanish sherry. I later learned that while the Philippine Islands atmosphere had passed muster, Ken White had asked Rogers Terrill, the associate publisher, "You've met Price a number of times—do you think he knows enough about Spanish sherry for me to risk this gag?"

While my information in this instance came from cellars and not from texts, Mr. White's query shows how important he considers authenticity.

If you're not sure, look it up.

Where?

Start at the public library, build up a library of your own, specialized to suit your type of fiction. For the detective story, get manuals of police procedure and organization; basic works on criminology, ballistics, pathology; accumulate news clippings on crime, and files of reliably narrated true crime accounts. At least learn enough to avoid referring to "steel jacketed bullets!"

For the adventure story, get maps; eye-witness accounts of events, countries, processes; basic studies in language, customs, flora and fauna, costume and weapons, food and housing.

In my 30,000 worder, "Detour to Kandahar," recently cover-featured by *Short Stories*, an Army Intelligence officer worked under cover to trip up a suspected Axis agent who posed as a philatelic broker. I am passably familiar with stamp collecting, and have a Scott catalog, which I consult to find out whether, for instance, special delivery stamps are used in Sarawak. However, there was too much at stake for me to guess about the details of Afghan stamps, so I consulted a philatelic broker, and borrowed his French and German catalogs. From this study, I got the basis of bits of dialogue which added to decorative verisimilitude, as well as the necessary and purely factual verisimilitude.

Since a super-deluxe car, belonging to an Afghan dignitary played a significant part, I studied the show report number of *The Motor*, published in London, to get details on the costliest pre-war jobs. Finally, a few phrases in Urdu were necessary, not to cater to the evil habit of italicization, but because they had story significance; so William St. Clair Tisdall's 450-page "Hindustani Conversation Grammar" came out of the stack.

Now, the happy ending: Dorothy McIlwraith dished out a substantial bonus.

Maps are important. Among a batch of others I got from the High Commissioner for India was a four-inch-to-the-mile topographical Moulmein Guide Map, (price, 3 rupees, 8 annas.) The details given by this sheet not only supplied the atmosphere, but suggested a good many of the minor movements of a plot in which the hero sets out to nab the priests who had robbed their own god of his emerald eye.

Let's look at the map. The contour lines indicate that Moulmein lies on low, flat ground between the east bank of the Salween River and a ridge which parallels the river. This ridge, whose elevation is a bit over 250 feet, is half a mile east of the river, and is crowned by the Kyaikthanlan Pagoda, the Uzina Pagoda, several anonymous pagodas, a flag-staff, a monastery, and the Commissioner's office. Get the picture brought up by map reading?

The General Postoffice, the River Survey office, the Municipal office, the Custom House, and the Main Wharf are all on Strand Road, between Great

Pagoda Street and Old Courthouse Street, a distance of little more than a quarter of a mile. It doesn't take a world traveller to deduce that this area is the heart of Moulmein.

Next we spot the temples, and pick one whose location, with respect to police stations, the lay of the land, and escape routes for the cops and robbers act, is most suitable.

Since our hero has Moslem allies, let's pick a mosque for a hideout; say, the Alir Mosque, on the river front. Double-headed arrows indicate that the creeks nearby are tidal inlets; all we need know to fake, accurately, the smells. We next note that the Moti Rahaman Saw Mill is not far away. Since elephants handle the teak logs in Burma, just dub in the cries of the mahouts, the splashing and the trumpeting of the elephants.

In my *Argosy* serial, "By Land and Sea," the hero's doings were keyed to press reports of the Japanese invasion of Singapore, so that no fictitious event would be inconsistent with any actual event. A one-inch-to-the-mile topographical map of Singapore Island enabled me to build up a vivid picture of the enemy advance and the hero's escape by taking into account the effect, on each phase of action, of such features as mangrove swamps, rubber plantations, hills, cemeteries.

A few of these maps are on a scale as large as five feet to the mile, and show fire hydrants and filling stations. I got some from the Surveyor General of Egypt, others from the Malayan Information Service; still others from the Federated Malay States Railways, and the Director General of the Royal Siamese Railways. And most of these government offices issue lists of publications on such topics as forestry, mining, fishing, agriculture, public lands, climate; scholarly monographs on native law, arts and crafts, native customs.

The United States Consul General at Beirut, Syria, sent me data on social, economic, climatic, and industrial conditions in Syria. While this in itself is by no means sufficient for faking a story of Damascus, it goes a long way toward giving up-to-date background for reminiscences and descriptions of my considerable number of Syrian friends.

The U. S. Hydrographic Office publications are basic necessities, no matter how widely the adventure author has travelled. The following bit from "Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot" speaks for itself: Hodeidah Town . . . estimated population, 12,000 . . . including a British Indian community of about 100, and 14 Europeans, mostly Greeks, who have shops; there are numerous Somalis, Abyssinians, and Arabs from the Hadramaut. . . The houses are high and usually of stone or brick, with flat roofs, on which are huts of matting or reed, where the inhabitants go to get the cool air at night. The old town, close to the shore, is surrounded on its inner sides by a wall; outside the wall is a large area of thatched houses. . . There are two forts . . . both falling into ruins, but conspicuous from seaward, as is also the grand mosque minaret, a tall spire, and the cupola of the palace of the Mutasserif; the palace is white-washed, with a black vertical stripe in the middle. . . The Tomb of Shir Yonis, 1400 yards southward of the south fort, is a good mark in the afternoon . . . chief exports . . . hides, skins, and coffee . . . imports . . . cereals, rice cotton piece goods . . . yarn, petroleum, iron and steel, silk, general stores. . . Khedivial Mail Steamships call every fortnight . . . steamer of Messrs. Comwasjee, Dinshaw & Bros. run weekly . . . there is a telegraph line to Sanaa. . .



"This book's too spicy—we'll have to tone it down. How about a black cover?"

These books cost \$1.80 each. For the duration, they are not sold to civilians, though at the request of the O.W.I. Magazine section, the Hydrographic Office will supply them to writers whose work warrants such a concession.

Although I have soldiered in the Philippines, I invariably send a carbon copy of my Jim Kane series, featured in *Adventure*, to Major C. C. Staples, who for ten years commanded Filipino troops in Mindanao. And I don't lose face when I write Ken White that the major found a boner. Quite the contrary.

I've batted around Mexico, jungle and city, mountain and desert, but whenever I write of that country, I have the yarn checked by Felix Flammonde, who spent six years in the capital, working for a newspaper; and some MSS. are rechecked by Odo B. Stade, who commanded a regiment of Pancho Villa's Yaqui troops.

Not long ago, I did a yarn about Chinese pirates boarding a Japanese gunboat. Since I'd never been on a gunboat, I referred to "Bluejackets' Manual," and for good measure, I consulted Captain Earle Garvin, U.S.M.C., who'd served in China. He told me that the gunboats which police the Pearl River are peculiar in design, and of unusually low freeboard; all in all, my scene was a thrilling phoney, until I altered a few details.

The service of these, and half a dozen other experts costs me nothing, because I reciprocate when they are up a stump. For instance, one of Walt Disney's writers needed information on the Ouled Nail dancing girls of Algiers, and couldn't find anything in the studio library. He called on me for the dope, and got it.

Corresponding with service men is considered a patriotic duty; it's also useful. I keep in touch with all grades from buck private to brigadier general. The field notes, and the thirty rolls of 35mm. film which Colonel X sent me from the Sahara, and the Arabic books he picked up in the bazaars of Algiers have been valuable.

Subscribe to foreign newspapers. My file of Manila Tribune rotogravure section, accumulated pre-war, has been worth hundreds of dollars in business gained.

Don't skip museums when you need facts on weapons, utensils, garments, and the like. Although I have collected Oriental carpets for a good many years, some of the stories centering about rugs required accurate specific knowledge of peculiarities of color, weave, and pattern; and it's rarely that you ever see a XVI century Herati outside of a museum.

One of my most important research accessories is a photographic laboratory in which I microfilm out-of-print books which are not for sale. Microfilming is far quicker than making notes, and far more efficient; the note-taker invariably omits details which seem useless at the moment, and later turn out to be vital. There is no substitute for photographic copies of maps and illustrations.

For my Jim Kane guerilla series, I make an 11x14 copy of the microfilm map of the province in which the action is to take place. On this I sketch, from a Golden Shell Oil map, the highway system. From other sources, I chart enemy airports, and garrisons. A forestry map supplied by Commonwealth of the Philippines Department of Special Services, tells me which areas are wooded, which are overgrown with cogon grass, which are cultivated. When the composite is prepared, I set to work, dead sure that I will not be having Kane's men following jungle trails when they're in a region that's one hundred percent grass lands.

Camera, enlarger, and accessories cost less than \$150. The outfit has paid for itself, many times over. But if you don't want to bother with such a setup, don't forget you can get maps photostated at 35 cents a sheet.

Sure enough, my research methods involve work and expense, but when, though without being smug about it, I look at my year's dividends, I have no kick at all.

Many writers stock up on classics, a thesaurus, a dictionary, and some popular works on their pet subjects, and think they have a research library. Get down to bed rock! When I needed data on Chinese secret societies, I laid out \$45 for a three-volume, last-word monograph on the subject. For a historical yarn on Afghanistan, I had a dealer search until he found the biography of Amir Dost Mohammed Khan, written in 1840, by a Kashmiri named Mohan Lal; also, the autobiography of Amir Abdurrahman Khan. These gave the native viewpoint, not the tourist's impression.

Beware of "popular" books. Many of them are riddled with absurdities. I never accept any one author as a source of detail; while he may be accurate, he may also be reporting an unusual event, under the impression that what he sets down is typical, rather than the exception.

As a groundwork for my Asiatic adventure yarns, I studied Arabic, and made a survey of Persian and Urdu. For my recent Chinese yarns, I not only got the O.W.I. list of proper names, to avoid absurd and perhaps offensive combinations, but I also got a dictionary. Mr. James Shen, of the Chinese News Service, bought me a grammar, a cake of ink, and a brush, so I could practice calligraphy.

While this may be carrying research to extremes, it is psychologically sound: if you learn to make your fingers act like Chinese fingers; if you fill your nose with the camphor smell of Chinese ink; if you learn to grind ink until you get just the right viscosity, and learn that strokes won't have the char-

acteristic Chinese sweep if the ink is too thin, or too thick; if you learn to keep your cuff from blotting the first column when you start writing the second—

You're getting a bit closer to the people about whom you're writing; your Chinese scholar or merchant will be a little less phoney.

The value of research is this: that while it can't ever give you a complete picture of, for instance, Moslem life, it can at least warn you against that which no Moslem would ever do. Negative, yes; but for just that reason, valuable. You'd not be condemned for failing to mention that Hassan, a True Believer, loathed pork; but you'd catch hell for saying that Hassan liked ham sandwiches.

Languages are important. A helpful librarian, (and I have yet to find one who is not only willing but eager to assist and advise) once set to work to get me the data for an historical novelette about Benito Juarez. The standard works were good, but —standard. She finally looted a university library, getting half a dozen books and pamphlets fairly dripping with such details as the color and the name of each of the horses ridden by Juarez' staff, after his defeat at Zacatecas; but the entire lot was in Spanish. Luckily, I read that language as readily as I do English; the same goes for German and French.

Henry S. Kuttner and his charming wife, whose by-line is C. L. Moore, are scooping up Portuguese via Linguaphone. Sorry I'm not at liberty to be specific about their reasons for such research, but it is not merely for cultural purposes.

For out-of-print works I call on Schulte's Book Store, Inc., 80 Fourth Avenue, New York City; for oriental subjects, Orientalia, Inc., 47 West 47th Street, New York City 19. Finally, for "publishers remnants," I deal with Union Library Association, 121 East 24th Street, New York City 10. The benefits of the dealer last named are summed up in this: I got, for 89 cents, a book published at \$3, and with that, plus a bit of additional research, hewed out a historical yarn for which *Argosy* paid \$825. Research does pay.

Mere facts do not go far in themselves. After they have been accumulated, their implications must be dramatized, given human interest and human importance.

Consider the following: Senator Stewart, of Nevada, risked his life to rescue men trapped in a blazing mine. Thrice broke, each time he recovered and made another million. When a certain mine petered out, he kept digging, and meanwhile, bought up all the shares; he made millions when at last he got to the new ore-body. Then look at an assayer's manual and consider the dull routine for assaying an ore specimen. Next, study the ways of speculators.

Here's what gave life to the dreary facts: a character whose father, grubstaked time and again, had always been hoodooed, resolved to bury the jinx, after burying the old man. The method he proposed was to grubstake someone else, instead of being grubstaked. He has only a few dollars in his jeans. He meets a girl who believes in him. There is also a pushcart peddler who, seeing that the boy's shoes are very thin, resolves them while the boy is asleep. The peddler moves on, and the kid, waking up, fears he has been hoodooed by this gift of shoe-leather. Later, the peddler-philosopher teams up with the kid, who makes an ally of the Senator, beating the crooked assayers, the claim jumpers, and stock manipulators.

The story is not about mining technicalities; these are merely background. The story, first, last, and always is that of a boy, *naïf* and eccentric from having been brought up in poverty and loneliness by a prospector. His non-stock personality, clashing with "normal" people, gives life and meaning to the background facts.

Research, however, contributes to character-individuality. I dug through a thick stratum of bad men, cowpunchers, sheriffs, bankers foreclosing mortgages, and discovered the pioneers of photography, who went west to photograph mountains and Indians. These picture men had to make each plate in the field. A pack mule carried the laboratory and factory. These facts gave me a Western which was different.

## ||| UNIFORM INTO BATHROBE

... By NARD JONES

THOUSANDS of writers and part-time writers will soon be shifting from uniform into bathrobe, or old sweater, or whatever comfortable garb was their habit when perspiring before the typewriter. Hundreds of writers have already been honorably discharged and have made the change, and I am one of those.

The great majority of writers who went into service gave up free-lance writing. Many were just too busy, and others, with time on their hands perhaps, suddenly discovered that they had lost the desire to write. Definitely, something happens to a man in uniform. He is in a new world, and that world becomes much more important than the civilian world he has left. Sometimes nothing in that civilian world seems important at all—and certainly not the fabrication of stories.

There are, of course, some notable exceptions to prove the rule. Lieutenant Commander Alan Bosworth, U. S. N. R., does an excellent job for the Navy wherever he may be—and continues to turn out fine stories for the *Post*. Max Miller, also in the Navy, has completed a moving book about life on a carrier. It ran serially in *Liberty*. Bill Worden, the ubiquitous and courageous war correspondent, can still do first-class fiction for the *Post* and the women's magazines. There are others who have managed to maintain this enviable balance between the world of the uniform and the world of civilians. But any editor or agent will tell you that from most of those who go off to war there is nothing but silence.

Living on the West Coast where the Jap menace was keenly felt, I volunteered six months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. At this distance I cannot honestly say how much of my decision was patriotism and how much was boredom. I do remember thinking, whatever happened, I would certainly pick up some good material for use one day. I think there is nothing to be ashamed of in that thought. It is the inescapable reaction of any man, or woman, who has written fiction for long.

For the first year I was actually too busy to write a line. Later on, I had the time—but I found to my dismay that I lacked almost everything I needed, except typewriter and paper. I lacked usable ideas. I was without drive—and, worst of all, I had lost in-

The same routine applies to detective, adventure, and every other kind of story. A banal yarn means that the author doesn't know enough about his background to do individualized work, and that he is, moreover, too lazy to dig below the surface.

Spend less time at writers' conferences, and writers' mutual admiration societies, and meet people who know things you don't know; you write about people, not about writers!

Though my staff of experts and my map and book collection took years to develop fully, they paid dividends right from the start. However beautiful your thoughts, however powerful your narrative and dramatic sense, these are not worth a damn until they're keyed to *facts*. Hence, research: find the facts, bring 'em back dead, and then, *make 'em live!*

terest. I knew that it was fatal not to keep writing, and yet writing did not seem important. I cannot explain this too clearly, but the reader who has been in uniform, or is wearing one now, will understand me. And because I have had ten months of civilian life under my belt already, perhaps my experience will help those drifting back.

Whether you have been away for a year or for three or four years, it will seem to you that you have been away forever. You will wonder if all the markets have not gone off and left you, and if there has not been some sweeping change in editorial needs that makes you a has-been. I assure you that so many of the younger and more vigorous writers were away also that you are coming back to "start even." And meanwhile, one editor consoled me, the public has grown a little wearier of the older hands who did not go away.

You will run into many people who will say, "What a lot you will have to write about now!" That will be revolting to you, because you probably will not want to write about it. And that very fact may worry you. Don't let it. It is pretty generally agreed that war stories have about reached the saturation point. If you are old enough (as I am!) to remember the last war you recall that it wasn't until about ten years after the armistice that World War I stories became really popular. And that war was not nearly so exhaustively "written up," in both fiction and non-fiction, as this one has been. It may be fifteen or twenty years after the World War II finish before editors are ready for war stories again. By that time your distaste will have gone and you will be able to do some fine, objective fiction with a war background. Although I was not quite old enough to get into the last war I do remember selling stories to Eugene Clancy's pulp magazine *War Stories* in 1925—seven years after the armistice—and that magazine was highly popular then. It was about this time that there were issued floods of air-war magazines.

Just before entering the Navy I had every reason to feel that I was about to crash through in a big way. I had made a little money from writing since graduating from college in 1926, had sold about two hundred and fifty short stories and had begun to get one occasionally in the so-called smooth paper magazines. I had written five novels which did not sell



very well, and then a sixth which was on the best-seller lists for a year—and another one was in the hands of the publisher.

Then the war came on, and I forgot about writing. Or rather, I tried to forget about it. The point is, I didn't do any. And then in May of last year I took the cover off the typewriter and stared at it.

That was about all that I did do, for a while. When I did get started, my efforts were feeble. They came back in a hurry from editors who had been helpful friends but who could not, naturally, let friendship stand in the way of loyalty to their magazines! I felt like the rawest, the most bewildered beginner. I began going back over my old stuff—and that is bad! I don't advise it. Edna Ferber said very recently that she hadn't read her books again; she wasn't yet that old!

Finally, after several months, it dawned on me that I had better accept the fact that I was—once again—a beginner. That meant swallowing pride and working harder. I felt I had to make a sale. That was important. I had to feel that I could do it once more.

All right. Once I had written a dozen or so newspaper serials. The pay was low, but if you have a certain inventiveness, they go quickly. I would do a newspaper serial. I sent an outline to the *Chicago Daily News* for a six-part serial to run one week. They offered a hundred dollars, about a cent a word, if they liked the story when completed.

I'm afraid that it was a pretty horrible piece, that serial called "Dark Vacation"—but I was as careful with it as ever I had been with a serious novel. I had stage fright and I had it badly. But I finished it, and shipped it off, trembling. It sold.

Then I tried a short-short that was refused by almost every magazine that prints short-shorts. But I got rid of it to the McClure Syndicate for a mere five dollars—five dollars that meant almost as much as the hundred right then, not in money but in morale. That morale was boosted further when McClure's gave another five because they felt it was the best short-short they had released during the week.

Finally I sold a story of three thousand words, at a good price, to *The Family Circle*. This meant a great deal because before the war they had been one of my best markets, and since leaving the service I had not been able to please them at all.

The climb back has not been a steady winning. Because I wanted to get back on the book lists I began another novel. I did about 50,000 words, half of it, and sent it off for comment. I knew before I mailed it what the comment would be. Neither the agent nor the publisher was very happy about it, although it could be published if I would finish it. I decided to put it aside and begin another book—when I get an idea for one!

My income in the first year of writing after my stretch in the Navy will be about the same as for my second year of writing back in 1928. That is not a gripe, but merely a statement of fact. It represents progress because for three and a half years I sold hardly a line. So far in 1945 I am a little ahead of 1944—but any experienced writer knows that this doesn't mean the average will hold up. I'm still working and I hope it will. I've gone back to the old schedule in the old days. I'm trying to write something, anything, every day in the year.

Perhaps this will encourage you, if you are just now trading the uniform for a bathrobe: I find it sort of fun to be a beginner again. The old thrill

of learning the tricks has come back, and the great satisfaction of seeing really hard work pay off.

Maybe you will come back and get right into your stride. Many of us will, and I hope you are one of those.

If you are not, if you are heading into the same difficulties I encountered, the best suggestion I can make is that you make up your mind simply to begin all over again. Your old experience will be in there helping you—but don't count on it or it won't come. And you may find that the war has given a new depth and a new understanding to your writing, a quality that you never owned before. It will be up to you to make the most of it.

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Merry-Day House, Inc., 421 Hudson St., New York 14, a new name in the publishing world, is offering prizes for juvenile books for children between the ages of three and ten. These books, we are informed by Lawrence Lariar, editor, will be the fore-runner of a series to be published in the spring of 1946. "With regard to the character of the contest, it is difficult to impose limitations, as we cannot attempt to define our needs," said Mr. Lariar. "Basically, however, we want new ideas, new characters, and new approaches to the young reader. This might include novelty books and any other type of book a child might enjoy. We are offering a prize of \$500 for the best juvenile submitted. There will be a second prize of \$200 and a third prize of \$100, plus generous royalties. A complete descriptive booklet of the contest will be forwarded to all who request it."

*Living Poetry Quarterly*, 153 Garden St., La Porte, Ind., announces that, effective July 1, it will pay cash on acceptance for poetry. "This policy," states Margaret Dierkes, editor, "will replace our previous system of offering book prizes and complimentary copies of the magazine. We consider all types and forms of poetry. Manuscripts should be accompanied by the usual stamped, self-addressed return envelope." Rates to be paid were not announced.

*American Druggist*, 527 Madison Ave., New York 22, is henceforth paying \$15 for each cartoon bought. Please submit roughs.



"And then one day I figured out a one hundred per cent foolproof method for using stamps twice!"

# I DISCOVER THE CATHOLIC PRESS

. . . By JOSEPH LAWREN



Joseph Lawren

Forty-three months and nine days ago (this confession is penned May 9, 1945) I burned my bridges behind me. Since between St. Petersburg, Florida, where I was marooned at the time, and New York City where my bread had been thickly buttered, there were many bridges, it was sink or swim. Since I cannot swim a stroke, I sank into writership—a free-lance artificer of articles. I still live to tell the tale. I have earned my bread by the sweat of my pen. My records disclose that editors have been kind enough to buy, and pay for 701 of my articles. Why did they do it? As long as I write to live and live to write, I shall be searching for the correct answers. The professional writer, it seems to me, should be constantly trying to find what the editors want to buy, instead of trying to find the editor who will buy the article which the writer wanted to write.

I had begun making my way along what is supposed to be the thorny road to writership, when I chanced to run across an article on *The Catholic Press*. Its reading yeasted nostalgic memories. I recalled the day, more than twenty years ago, when the Rev. William Talbot Smith came into my office—*The Theatre Realty Co.*—on the 22nd floor of a 42nd street and Broadway building in New York City.

"You have so much space, Mr. Lawren," he said. "Would you care to rent a portion of it for my organization—*The Catholic Actors' Guild*?" I would—gladly.

That was the beginning of more than ten years of friendship with the members of *The Catholic Actors' Guild*. The reading of the article brought sharply to mind those ten years. Especially did I recall the kindness of its founder, and the saintliness of Father Fahey who succeeded him as president.

I said to myself, "Perhaps Catholic editors will be as friendly to a non-Catholic as my old friends in *The Catholic Actors' Guild* were."

I went to work. To every magazine on that Catholic list, I sent a postcard requesting a sample copy. The response was heartening. I waited until the returns were all in. Then I took a day off and studied each magazine with the same care as my tailor takes when he measures me for a suit. Those magazines which were purely religious, I put aside against the time when my study of purely Catholic subjects would qualify me to write in a field where at present my ignorance was colossal.

In the magazines which opened their covers to general subjects, or to material which was but slightly Catholic in subject matter, I studied each article—its word length, its introductory paragraph, its style, and above all its subject matter. Then I noted down

the information at the head of each article, together with a list of similar subjects.

*The Catholic Boy*, 25 Groveland Terrace, Minneapolis, Minn., was before me. Certainly an article on "Night Baseball" would appeal to any American boy, whatever his religious beliefs. So I sent a postcard to Westinghouse and to the General Electric Company, stating that I would greatly appreciate any informational data and illustrative photographs for an article on night baseball. Back came, pronto, more information and illustrative photographs than could be absorbed in one article. I wrote a thousand words and sent it to *The Catholic Boy*. Back came a check for \$10—1 cent a word.

Harold W. Sandburg, the editor, could not have guessed the dire consequences of his kindness. For article after article flowed onto the editorial desk, and check after check did not tend to slow up my contributions to his magazine.

"Our Most Ancient Tree—*The Cypress*" (photographs and informational data from *The Cypress Association*) 1000 words, brought another \$10. Then to my pleasant surprise, Harry H. Long, supervising editor of *The Catholic Boy*, sent me a check for \$15 for an article entitled "Agassiz Village—Where Newsboys Govern Themselves." Here again the regular routine was followed. A penny postcard brought photographs and information from Agassiz Village, snuggling in the piny fastness of Maine.

A steady stream of articles in my own name, and also in the name of my three feminine alter-egos, poured into the editorial sanctums of *The Catholic Press*. The first one sent to *The Catholic Miss* (the same address as *The Catholic Boy*) was "The Story of the Phonograph." (Photographs and material for the article furnished through the courtesy of *The Victor Talking Machine Co.*, Camden, N. J.) A check for \$9 spurred me into high-gear of production. Article after article under my feminine pen-names was posted to this magazine for Catholic girls. But no answer came to my many contributions. A long and ominous silence ensued. Then, movielike, came the dawn. And with it came the postman. And with him came a letter from *The Catholic Miss*. I tore open the welcome letter. Out spilled several checks, totalling \$67.50, in payment of seven articles. At last, I had graduated from retailing into wholesaling.

It was the Rev. Harry H. Long, the associate editor of *The Catholic Boy* and *The Catholic Miss*, who was the first to guess at my quadruple personality. For in a letter to one of my female non de plumes he wrote, "You are Joseph Lawren, are you not?" With that query there was enclosed a check from the *Catholic Digest* for the reprint-rights to an article which had appeared in *The Catholic Boy*, under one of my feminine pen-names. The check was for \$20—more than I had received for the original article! This was earning money the easy way! It was the first reprint of an article—since, there have been several others from which I have received a monetary reward.

*The Young Catholic Messenger*, and its younger brother, *The Junior Catholic Messenger*, both located at 124 E. Third St., Dayton, O., have proved to be my most remunerative Catholic markets. I have sold them 25 articles for which I have received a total of \$327. This amount included a check for \$40 for an article, "The Banana—From Tree to Table." All information and photographs were gladly furnished by the United Fruit Company of Boston, Mass., at a total expenditure on my part of one cent. This article ran to 1000 words. Thus, payment was at 4 cents a word. It was the highest price I had received for any of my articles, a number of which had been sold to the minor national slicks.

*The Catholic Mirror*, 1387 Main Street, Springfield, Mass., has bought and paid for 23 articles. The returns on the first 17 articles averaged about \$3.25. Then the next five accepted averaged \$7. However, the last one taken brought a check for \$15. It was at the crest in this rise in the returns for my wordage that *The Catholic Mirror* requested that no more manuscripts be sent until 1946. I shall await with as much patience as I can command the reopening of their editorial gates.

Later I discovered *The Victorian*, Lackawanna, N. Y., and its heart-warming editor, Robert K. Doran. I had been contributing a series on outstanding boys to a number of juvenile publications. Gathering several of these articles and threading them into a story entitled, "Outstanding Boys of Today" (information and photographs obtained from the boys themselves, from clues clipped from newspapers and magazines) I sent it on to *The Victorian*. By return mail came one of the friendliest letters that I have yet received from an editor, offering me \$25 for the article.

"Will this be satisfactory?" wrote "Bob" Doran. I call him Bob because he always addresses me as Joe. I could hardly restrain myself from writing "Cut it in half, and it will still be satisfactory." (I know that Bob will not regret his generosity when he reads this confession.)

Even more satisfactory than Bob Doran's checks are his letters. Though I, and one of my feminine pseudonyms, have received 21 checks from *The Victorian*—all very welcome—even more welcome have been the invariably kind and friendly letters received from its editor.

Bob sends long and illuminating bulletins to his contributors. The last one, number four, contains what appears to be the best summary of the needs of *The Catholic Press*. He writes, "A number of non-Catholics have written and asked if they could contribute to *The Victorian*. They figure that we are probably interested only in Catholic contributors.

"Not at all. I know definitely the religious affiliations of very few of our contributors, and while the majority are undoubtedly Catholic, I do happen to know that not a few are non-Catholic.

"Catholic, Protestant, Jew—all are equally welcome to the pages of *The Victorian*. We don't care what your religious affiliation is. The script is the only thing that counts."

Although I have received invariable courtesy from the wide field of magazines to which I submit material, the editors of *The Catholic Press* are in a class by themselves. Their letters, even with rejections, fire the cockles of my heart with their warmth and kindness.

Yes—a resounding yes!—has been the answer to my question as to whether the glow of friendship would be as warm from the editors of *The Catholic*

*Press* as that which I had enjoyed from my friends of *The Catholic Actors' Guild*.

I shall try to enlarge my Catholic field, not because they pay as well as their counterparts in the non-Catholic market—or better—but because I am sure that I shall be the recipient of heart-warming and intensely personalized letters, and because I find in friendliness, payment greater than money.

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*Real Story and Real Romances*, Hillman Women's Group, 1476 Broadway, New York 18, offer a wide-open market. "We need short fiction stories of 5000 to 6500 words, novelettes of 10,000 words," writes Erma Lewis, managing editor. "We want dramatic first-person stories, logically motivated, realistically told. For reader identification, the events should be highly probable. The narrator must have a confession to make. . . In each issue we use one story told from the man's point of view. Occasionally we use the story of an older woman; usually, however, our heroines are young, either married or single. We do not want stories based on sex. The problems of life and romance in today's world form the basis of our stories. Background may be in any place where Americans live and work. . . In addition to fiction, we want short feature articles of 100 to 1000 words on subjects of interest to young women, both married and single, between the ages of 18 and 25. Inspirational and self-help material is preferred." And then Miss Lewis adds: "I hope your reader-writers will deluge me with material. We promise careful consideration of every manuscript submitted and a prompt report on synopses as well as stories."

*Junior Boys and Girls*, Christian Publications, Inc., 3rd and Reilly Sts., Harrisburg, Pa., is particularly interested in seeing stories of 1800 to 2000 words, interestingly written for junior-age (9 to 12) girls and boys, which carry a very definite *Spiritual or Gospel message*; also a few shorter length stories, 750 to 1200 words of same type; some missionary material; puzzles with a Bible background, etc. Payment is made on acceptance at rates varying with value of material. All manuscripts should be sent to Chester E. Shuler, associate editor.

*Camping World*, 25 W. 45th St., New York, has been suspended for the duration.

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## SONNET

By JANET H. BLAIR

When on immortal bards I ponder long,  
And verses read, which simple seem to be,  
I think, "How easy 'tis to write a song  
Extolling some fair maiden, or a tree.

"There's nothing to it—any words will do  
Just so they're vague enough and rhyme a bit."  
So, thinking thoughts of Shakespeare, Milton, too,  
I sit me down to call upon my wit.

But though the rhyme and meter are a cinch,  
And bright ideas flit freely through my mind,  
To put the two together in a clinch  
Is harder than a man would think, I find.

So here it is, and if you think it bad,  
Try one yourself. You'll wish you never had!

# ||| JUVENILE PULP BOOKS

. . . By ROY J. SNELL

Perhaps you have believed that there are no juvenile pulp books. If so, go to your nearest variety chain and see what you find; paint books with many pictures and few words; little thick books, four inches square and an inch thick, containing 15,000 words, and with a picture opposite every page; full-length teen-age books, 45,000 or 50,000 words long, and numerous others. Many of them are better written than some 60-cent series books, or even those that sell for much more.

"Can I do them?"

That is what I asked myself five or six years ago. A friend invited me to ride with him to a small city where some of these books are made. I went—and talked to someone in the publishing business—then went away. About a year later the editor wrote, offering me \$150 if I would do him one of those little square books, not more than a hundred words longer or shorter than 15,000 words.

I didn't think I could spare the time and energy, as I was about to start off on a lecture tour, but the money appealed to me. I wrote the book in a week and had my check three days later. The checks always come through like that.

Since that time I have written fifteen of these juvenile pulps, eight of them around 50,000 words. Last year, counting books 8,000 to 15,000 words long, more than half a million of my books were sold. This year there will be close to half a million more.

The books were all written for a flat price, from \$50 to \$250 a book. The little square books pay from \$75 to \$150; some small flat books, a few thousand words long, bring \$50, and the long teen-age ones, regular books in size, bring \$200 to \$250. I have written one of the long ones in three weeks,

but I find that is pushing the big yellow pencil rather hard.

The first book, "Ski Patrol," I sold to a publisher by talking him into it. It was a war story based on the first war between Finland and Russia. It was first a 50-cent seller, then drifted into a 25-cent pulp. The \$150 10-cent seller was my second book in pulp. After the editor (not the publisher of "Ski Patrol") had written offering me the job and outlining in a very general way the nature of the book to be done, I selected a background suited to the job, and one with which I was familiar, thought out a general outline, then jumped on the train and went to talk it over with the editor. We worked it over but the general plan for the story, the plot, was mine.

"Wings Over England," a 45,000-word book, was written for an Eastern publisher but failed to make the grade. I submitted it to my pulp friend, and he took it, as it was. He suggested the title, "Wings for Victory." It is the story of Pearl Harbor. Practically all of the story happened in an hour and fifteen minutes, acting time, almost a record of brevity of time consumed in a 45,000-word book. It's worth reading just to see how it's done.

Three books of 50,000 word length, "Norma Kent of the Wacs," "Sally Scott of the Waves," and "Sparky Ames and Mary Mason of the Ferry Command," were suggested by the editor, who asked me to do four books in four months. I suggested that he let me do only three. The titles, as you see, suggest a definite trend. I submitted a list of possible names for characters. The editor chose the ones he liked best. He wrote his own titles. I worked out the plots and talked them over with him, may have submitted an outline of a sort. In one book I had to do considerable revising. The others went through as I had written them.

The unique feature of such books as "Air Fighters of America" and "Vic Sands of the Flying Fortress," two of my \$150 books in the 10-cent field, is that there is a picture opposite each page of about 100 words. Thus in writing the story the author must produce something in each hundred words that may suggest a dramatic picture. That calls for action *plus*. I don't recall that I bothered with chapters, but I find each of these books has ten chapters. I believe the publisher divides the script into chapters to suit himself.

At the present moment, publishers are confined for the most part to books for which they already have plates. But one of my publishers informs me that we are to have pulp from Russia and Norway in the not-too-distant future and I have hopes of doing a book for him this summer. War is definitely *out*. Adventure, mystery, all quite exciting, stories written about real, important people, these probably will go in our bright new world. My book in the pulp field, "Jane Withers and Her Phantom Violin," is a "famous person" book.

The flat sums paid for these books do not represent a lot of money, still—in the past twenty years I have seen books of new writers appear on the two-dollar table. They stayed one-two-three years—a book a year—and then they were gone. Their books sold two or three thousand each, made them \$400 to \$600, then failed to sell. Would you rather



"Here's the bonus you said you'd give for Mr. Fall's manuscript if you had to!"



write six books for \$1200, have them sold for 35 cents and make a sale of a quarter of a million copies, or write three two-dollar books for \$1200 and have them reach a sale of 10,000?

Perhaps no one has ever had exactly that choice. Yet, if I were confronted with such a problem, my decision would be made instantly, and that in spite of the fact that I have nearly half a million books sold at prices ranging from one to two dollars. I would say, "Let me write for the masses and go hang the big strut on prices."

There are many writers, no doubt, who would say, "Cheap books! How I hate them! Those who stoop to writing them deprive legitimate books of their rightful sale." I believe that quite the opposite is true. I'll tell you why; for five seasons I sold my own books over the counter in a department store each December. Three of the books I sold were priced at 50 cents. The same three books could be had, in a cheaper binding, across the street, less than a block away, for 25 cents. I sold at least 1500 of the 50-cent books and not once did the customer say, "I won't take it. I can get the same book in the dime store for a quarter." This would seem to indicate that the dime-store trade in books is entirely distinct from the department and book store trade. These dime-store books go into poor homes where there is no library, only a few cheap books on the table. But if, through reading dime-store books, children acquire a taste for reading, does it not seem probable that, sooner or later, they will find their way to the classier book places to purchase so-called "legitimate books?"

I came from the masses—am still a part of them. My grandfather was a blacksmith in a small Vermont

village; my father, a well driller. I too have done my share of hard physical labor. I was 35 years old when I sold my first story.

Having lectured to half a million of them in their schools, I know the children of the masses. Poles, Finns, Jews, little black children—I know them all. And to feel that I have done a little something for half a million of them gives me a joy that dollars could never bring.

And of course, to come off my high horse, I am not a little vain. Last month, during Children's Book Week, I was in Detroit, and there in a large chain-store window were a dozen of my 35-cent and 39-cent books. They had a front seat in the top row. Last week I saw the same thing on Madison Street in Chicago, and returning home, saw it again on Front Street in the old home town. When I think of that picture being repeated a thousand times all over America, how can I say to myself, "You poor simp! You sold those books for a flat price!"

I can't.

Following are some of the principal publishing houses for the chain-store juvenile book market:

**Whitman Publishing Co.**, Racine, Wis.  
**M. A. Donahue & Co.**, Chicago.  
**Merrill Publishing Co.**, 700 Block, S. La Salle St., Chicago.  
**Saalfeld Publishing Co.**, Akron, Ohio.  
**Citadel Press**, 120 E. 25th St., New York 10.  
**Grosset & Dunlap**, 1107 Broadway, New York 10.  
**Samuel Gabriel Sons**, 200 5th Ave., New York 10.  
**Platt & Munk, Inc.**, 200 5th Ave., New York 10.  
**Cupples & Leon Co.**, 460 4th Ave., New York 16.  
**McLoughlin Bros., Inc.**, Springfield 1, Mass.  
**Rand McNally & Co.**, 536 S. Clark St., Chicago 5.  
**Reilly & Lee Co.**, 325 W. Huron St., Chicago.

## IT PAYS TO REWRITE

. . . By DUANE W. RIMEL

Every writer is familiar with the favorite story which keeps coming back, but in which the writer still has faith. He knows it is good, but—!

Chances are that what the story needs is complete and thorough rewriting. The following personal experiences show what I mean:

Over a year ago I began studying *Fantastic Adventures*, determined to hit that market. Eventually I wrote a 10,000 worder slanted at it. It was a tale placed in a hidden valley in the wilds of Idaho where a beautiful white princess and her evil brother ruled a small group of social outcasts who kept no contact with the outside world, and didn't want to. The hero and two comrades, barely living through a boat crash on the turbulent Snake River, are pulled by treacherous currents into the hidden valley of Zernu. There, with one elderly man suffering a broken leg and the others clubbed unconscious by strange looking, half-naked whites, begins their fantastic adventure. Eventually, the hero falls for the princess, they have a number of close calls, because she has turned against her people, the hero's comrades are killed, and the lovers finally escape.

The agent called this "an interesting adventure yarn," but doubted if Palmer would take it, on the ground that it was not fantastic enough, and suggested that if *FA* didn't buy, it be revised and slanted at *Jungle Stories*. Palmer rejected, so I decided to follow my agent's advice.

I've never been in California, let alone Africa, but I got a copy of *Jungle Stories* and read every story through. I took home from the library African travel books on Northern Rhodesia. I learned a lot about the natives, rivers, trees, and animals.

Rewriting is always a tough job for me; but I dug in and sacked the first three pages altogether. (It had taken me that long to get the three men in a tight spot.)

With my magic typewriter I whisked my lead characters from the wilds of Idaho to the wilds of Northern Rhodesia, and opened my story with the hero getting over the effects of a parachute jump from a plane that developed engine trouble above a deep valley. He and two comrades have come to explore the region before going by *safari* to search for the hero's father, lost in this locale years before. The elderly man still has his broken leg, the strange whites are now a chocolate color from much exposure to the sun, and the princess is as beautiful and tigerish as ever. The men are immediately in a tight spot, and one of them gets killed before the main action starts, building up suspense and arousing in the hero desperate thoughts of revenge.

This time, instead of having the hero thrust into a strange environment, I have him move in that vicinity of his own volition because he seeks information about his father, who may yet be alive. Unfortunately, his father has been killed years before

by the evil ruler, brother of the princess. When the hero learns this, he has to save his own hide, that of his one remaining comrade, and the princess, who now wants to escape with him. How they overcome tremendous odds takes up the rest of the story.

I did a lot of sweating, but the job was finally done—not very different from the original version, but much more compact and commercial; also 1090 words shorter. It was slanted at a very definite market.

The story went out again, and I held my breath. At last came an airmail reply from the agent, with an enclosure from the editor. The story, he said, was a bit fantastic, but he was willing to pay the regular rate for it. He suggested that I use more straight jungle adventure, and intimated that he would like to see more of my stuff.

That was a red-letter day.

The other rewrite experience concerns a story returned from *Weird Tales*. The editor, to whom I had previously sold a yarn, wrote that he felt the middle of the story fell flat; that it needed building up. "Only that and nothing more." When I first read the letter, I put the yarn away and went to work on something else. But it kept bothering me. Finally, I pulled the story out and began re-writing.

The story, a short, less than 3000 words, related the experiences of a man on waking in a shiny metal room that had no doors or windows. He has suffered amnesia, and can't remember how he got there. Gradually, memory returns and he recalls that he had been experimenting with telepathy, and had contacted an intelligence on another planet. As the story progresses, he remembers more and more, until it occurs to him that he *may not* be on the earth at all. In fact, it seems probable that he is a prisoner of the alien beings who are trying to communicate with him, but he has lost the serum he shot himself with so his mind could receive their messages! As all these things overwhelm the unfortunate man, I bring the story to a horrible end, with the beings sending the useless body back to earth.

In the rewrite, I carried the man's suspicions into action and stark reality, so that he had a hurried view of the strange planet's surface and a glimpse of some of the monstrous dwellers. There could now be no doubt in the reader's mind that the man *had* visited another planet before his mind became unhinged, causing his death.

Revised, the story ran to a full 3000 words. Once more I sent it to the agent. He passed it on to ye ed, who turned it down with regrets. My faith in re-writing exploded: I was ready to give the story up as a bad job. But not my agent, who sent the story to England. It was still there when I received an air-mail letter saying the editor wanted to see "The Metal Chamber" again.

Wildly excited, I tore my room apart searching for the carbon which had become misplaced, found it, and mailed it out, quick.

This time the editor took it, and when the story appeared, it occupied lead position, with a superb illustration.

Rewriting had paid good dividends after all.

□ □ □ □

The *Hartford Courant*, Hartford, Conn., uses poetry in "The Poet's Column." No payment is made, but clippings are sent to the poet whose work is used.

## LETTERS

### Salvage in Old Books

A. & J.:

I read your salvage blurb. But can't we do better than that? If the war stopped tomorrow, it still wouldn't ease off the paper shortage . . . but there are things we writers can do.

If each and every writer reading a notice like this will go to his bookshelves and wrestle with his honesty, we can all turn in enough books to make a real deposit on the scrap pile.

People hang on to books. The most worthless, old, decrepit, silly books still fill our shelves. I don't mean books that have any value. I can imagine no writer who doesn't have at least one or more (I had fifty) titles that are worthless. As *litra-choor* they stink between their covers. If a writer fears that some lowlifer of a salvage sniper will get his discarded books, all he has to do is to take the covers off and pull the books apart.

When we've done a good job with our own shelves, let's sell the same idea to our neighbors and friends.

VERNE F. RYLAND.

Independence, Mo.

### Wood on Agents

A. & J.:

I was much impressed with the Clement Wood article (March) wherein he classifies imitativeness as second only to literacy, and then goes on to say that the professional face must be put on every product submitted. No doubt if they followed these tips writers would be saving themselves a lot of grief.

But while I agree with Mr. Wood on these points, I find myself taking issue with other assertions, notably the paragraph about agents. I gather that his experience with them has not been altogether a happy one (and I cannot say that mine has been either). When he writes, "I have never found an agent who could sell five cents of my work," it rather leaves the reader up in the air. There must by some reliable agents, or if there are not, why does the *Author and Journalist* accept their advertisements year in and year out?

Again, I find his remarks regarding the financial rewards of writing somewhat discouraging. According to his article, Mr. Wood writes from 2,500 to 5,000 words per day. At the same time, he conducts a correspondence school class in poetry-writing and operates a farm. Isn't Mr. Wood, to quote the late O. O. McIntyre, "trying to keep too many balls in the air?" Daniel Wilbur Steele, I understand, writes only 500 words a day, and it would be interesting to observe results if Mr. Wood switched over to the Steele method, especially since, by his own admission, he has sold stories to the slicks at "a grand apiece."

As to writers being the first victims of a depression, I doubt if Guy Gilpatrick, Octavus Roy Cohen, and C. B. Kelland were seriously affected by it, since their stories continued to appear in the magazines.

If you have gained the impression that I am against Mr. Wood's article, then you are wrong. I regard it as one of the most thought-provoking pieces that has as yet appeared in your magazine.

E. W. TEITZEL.

1915 N. Market St.,  
Wichita 4, Kansas.

►A. & J. editors do not endorse, necessarily, the views of any writer who appears in our pages. By and large literary agents get a good break in the material we publish; that a dissenter like Clement Wood should express his uncensored views is in accord with our policy. There are writers who never would be happy with an agent, nor profitable to an agent (Mr. Wood is apparently in that category). And there are other writers who are far more successful and far happier working through an agent than they would be otherwise.

□ □ □ □

The *Cattleman*, Fort Worth, Texas, a monthly edited by Henry Biederman, uses livestock articles and those dealing with the romance of the West. They must be true stories: no fiction is used. Payment is made at varying rates, on publication.

# THE STUDENT WRITER

CONDUCTED BY WILLARD E. HAWKINS

## LXXV—CRIME FICTION FORMULAS

### (3) Deduction with Suspect Hero (Continued)

We continue with a few more examples of detective fiction in which the hero is in jeopardy as a leading suspect.

**TOO MANY LOCKS.** (Dale Clark in *Detective Tales*, March, 1944.)

Story told through a dialogue between a reporter and Detective Inspector. The reporter has come across the records of an old murder. A cobbler was murdered in his shop, despite an elaborate arrangement of locks on his doors. The reporter analyzes the circumstantial evidence and points out that it clearly indicates that the policeman who reported the case must have been guilty. The Inspector argues that the guilty man was an escaped criminal who could not be brought to justice because he was run over by a switch engine later in the same evening. Finally overcomes the reporter's arguments by asserting, "Anyway I know I didn't kill him." The Inspector was the officer involved in the old case.

This is strictly an arm-chair detective-story—analysis of a long-closed murder case. The suspect hero is, of course, in no danger; he was not even under suspicion at the time of the actual investigation. While the yarn falls within our present category, its actual theme is that elaborate theoretical deductions are of less value in arriving at the facts than ordinary common sense.

**MATINEE AT THE MORGUE.** (H. Q. Masur in *Ten Detective Aces*, January, 1945.)

Helen Craig, a former ticket-seller, is stabbed in a motion-picture theater. Peter Crown—efficiency expert who has been hired by Bolton, the manager, to find the cause of the theater's poor financial showing—is a suspect. Crown's investigation unearths sabotage on the part of Schramm, assistant manager—he has seemingly caused various accidents and discouraged business, presumably to get Bolton's job. Schramm also was in love with Helen—had threatened to kill her if she left him. Peter finds himself menaced as investigation proceeds—a mysterious shot is fired at him from ambush. Taking Bolton with him, Peter confronts Schramm with the evidence of his guilt. While they are talking, Peter absently glances at two theater ticket stubs he found in the murdered girl's effects. Both numbers are identical. He suddenly realizes that they prove Bolton guilty. The manager had been selling two sets of identically numbered tickets to patrons, reporting only one set and pocketing the difference in receipts. Helen, as a ticket-seller, had discovered this and must have been blackmailing Bolton, who thus had a motive for killing her. Peter accuses Bolton who, cornered, kills Schramm, is about to shoot Peter when police intervene in time to arrest him.

Peter, the hero-suspect, surprises the reader by pinning the crime on a least suspected character, the manager who hired him, when apparently he has proved Schramm guilty. This follows the Deduction with Menace formula with a suspect hero.

**IT HAD TO BE.** (Dorothy Dunn in *Detective Story*, December, 1944.)

Three persons admit killing Quillar Darst, theatrical tycoon. Paul Cornelius is obviously trying to shield his actress wife, Leah, who will

inherit Quillar's fortune. But the old doorman, narrator of the story, diverts the attention of police to himself. He has planted evidence on himself which convinces them he actually committed the murder. They arrest him, absolving Leah, who actually was guilty. The doorman makes the sacrifice because he believes the tragedy will make a great actress of her.

The suspect hero, in this case, exercises his ingenuity to prove himself guilty, thus reversing the usual procedure. It is a rather unusual twist for a detective story, although, of course, the theme of sacrifice is a familiar one in general fiction.

It may appear from our examples that Deduction with Suspect Hero, as a category distinct in itself, rests upon a rather slight foundation. Actually, all the examples given could have been included under Straight Deduction or Deduction with Menace. But the added feature of a hero who is also chief suspect, as well as—in some instances—the detective, makes a separate grouping of such stories helpful in our study of pulp detective requirements, especially since the frequency of their appearance on contents pages indicates a considerable demand for them.

### (4) The Dumb Cop Formula

One of the chief problems of detective story writers is to achieve novelty while adhering to a formula which is decidedly restricted. The factors are limited—a crime, suspects, clues, a detective who solves the case in an unexpected manner and pins it on as nearly as possible the least suspected person. Variations which enable us to speak in the plural of crime-fiction "formulas" are scarcely more than matters of emphasis. Thus, "Deduction with Menace" differs from "Straight Deduction" only to the extent that the detective and those close to him are personally endangered through the investigation. "Deduction with Suspect Hero" may belong to either of these classifications, but suspicion directed against the hero provides an added incentive for solving the crime.

The detective in most of the early yarns which have served as a pattern for this type of fiction was depicted as a sort of superman, solving cases by remarkable powers of observation and uncannily shrewd deduction. Typical of this genre were C. Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown, Philo Vance. It was natural that some writer—or perhaps several writers independently—should hit upon the idea of varying the formula by making the detective *not* at all super—just an ordinary plug of a policeman who solves cases by plain common sense. And—carrying the idea further—varying the formula by making the detective a nit-wit.

A series of yarns which appeared in the early days of *Redbook* (while it was still called *The Red Book* and was published in Chicago under the editorship of Ray Long) may have been the progenitor of this variation. The name of the author has been forgotten by this chronicler, but not his chief character—a youthful, gangling "detectatiff," whose chief

claim to that title was his correspondence-school diploma. This eccentric and altogether naive protagonist horned in on crime investigations and somehow blundered on to the solution, to the bafflement and chagrin of the constituted authorities.

This is the general formula still employed in similar stories. Two principal variations may be noted. In one case the chief character—a detective, policeman, newspaperman, or whatnot—appears to be dull-witted but actually is shrewd. In the other case, he is dumb, but manages somehow, usually through lucky accidents, to solve the case.

The example, "Too Many Locks," employed to illustrate the preceding category, "Deduction with Suspect Hero," could be instanced also as an example of the dumb cop formula. The newspaper reporter employs what he regards as brilliant deduction to prove that the policeman on the beat was the actual criminal. The policeman, claiming no extraordinary powers, methodically solves the case by common sense methods—and his solution is accepted as correct when a detective inspector, whose word the reporter regards as trustworthy, reveals that he was the ordinary policeman involved.

The formula is less frequently found in the pulps than might be expected. Two examples follow:

**IT COULD ONLY HAPPEN TO WILLIE.** (Joe Archibald in *Popular Detective*, April, 1944.)

Willie Klump, private detective, who is pictured by the author as stupid, lazy, and blundering, has a string of bad luck which includes the defection of his fiancée, Gertie, who deserts him for a policeman, Satchelfoot Kelly, incidentally taking all of Willie's money. At her behest, Satchelfoot is trying to improve his vocabulary by studying a dictionary. Fitzzy, a prisoner who is being held for complicity in a big payroll robbery, borrows the dictionary on pretext of working out a crossword puzzle. After the dictionary is returned to Satchelfoot, Willie borrows it for help in composing a letter by which he hopes to persuade a law firm to sue Gertie for his money. Thumbing through the dictionary, he comes across certain marked words. After numerous trials, he succeeds in putting them together in a message which informs Fitzzy's accomplices where the payroll loot is hidden. Satchelfoot turns up in a hospital, having been nearly beaten to death. Willie realizes that some one wanted the dictionary pretty badly and that its possession menaces his safety. Sure enough, he receives a nocturnal visit from a bruiser, Babe O'Dool, who has traced the dictionary to Willie. The ensuing fight in the rooming house brings the police, who subdue O'Dool. Willie informs them that they have captured Fitzzy's accomplice in the payroll robbery. He proves his case by disclosing the whereabouts of the payroll. In his effort to locate the dictionary, O'Dool incidentally kidnapped Gertie and tied her up in back of a laundry. A reconciliation is effected when Willie, temporarily a hero, releases her.

**OLLIE MEETS A KIDNAPER.** (Harold De Polo in *Private Detective*, March, 1944.)

Mark Van Orden, millionaire, leaves his son, Skip, in care of a rustic sheriff, Ollie Bascomb. Fellow townsmen laugh at Ollie and are scornful when they find him teaching the Van Orden boy to use a sling shot. It is well known that several attempts have been made to kidnap Skip, and wonder is expressed that the millionaire would place such trust in the old sheriff. While Ollie and the boy are on a fishing trip, a kidnaping attempt is made. The villain gets the drop on Ollie and apparently is about to succeed in his attempt, when Ollie foils him by knocking him out with the sling shot he has been teaching the boy to use.

These two furnish fairly clear examples of the main types of "dumb cop" yarns. In the first case, the detective actually is stupid and incompetent, but wins out by a lucky combination of circumstances. In the other, the presumption is that Ollie, though regarded as doddering and senile by fellow towns-

men, actually deserves the confidence placed in him by Skip's millionaire father.

## PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

1. Search out a number of yarns in the pulp detective magazines which fall within the category of Deduction with Suspect Hero.
2. Replot some of the stories given as examples of Straight Deduction and Deduction with Menace, so that the hero becomes a principal suspect and is obliged to solve the case in order to exonerate himself (or herself).
3. Locate further examples of stories involving "dumb" or supposedly inept individuals acting in the detective role.
4. Work out a few plots of your own along this line—perhaps modifying plots previously discussed in this series, or stories you have read, so that the detective falls in one of these categories.



## PRIZE CONTESTS

Huckleberry Mountain Artists Colony, Hendersonville, North Carolina, announces a four point contest opening July 1, 1945, and closing December 1, 1945, in which the following prizes are offered: First prize for best short story, article, poem, play, or radio script—one week at the Workshop Camp (board, room, tuition) and \$10 cash; Second prize for four sections—week-end at the Workshop Camp. Manuscripts are to be submitted anonymously with sealed envelope containing name and address inside and title of story, poem, etc., on outside. No manuscripts will be returned. Length limit for short story is 5000 words; for article, 1500 words; for play or radio script, 5000 words; for poems, lyric or sonnet, 20 lines. The contest is open to any writer in the United States or Canada. All manuscripts should be addressed to Huckleberry Mountain Artists Colony at above address.

George Blair, director of the University Theatre, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga., announces that the Theatre's second annual playwriting contest is now open to any resident of the United States. A total of \$500 in ten prizes will be awarded after the contest closes June 1, 1946. Terms of the contest are as follows: Full length play, any type, not more than two acts or 15 characters; no musical shows, operettas, operas accepted. The author retains full rights to the manuscript. Reading fee is \$5. First, second, and third place winners agree to give University Theatre a royalty-free production of their plays between September 1, 1946, and September 1, 1947. No guarantee of production is given on any of winning scripts, however. All material must be original, unpublished, and owned by the author. The awards will be divided as follows: First, \$140; second, \$120; third, \$100, and seven honorable mentions at \$20 each, \$140. All manuscripts and inquiries should be addressed to George Blair, Director.



*All Sports Digest*, P. O. Box 539, Ridgewood, N. J., is scheduled for early appearance. "We are of the opinion," states Robert J. Curley, editor, "that there is a definite need for an all-sports digest, a publication covering sports of all sorts, which will appeal to all the sports-minded, both young and old. . . . While we are using reprints, there is a need for short articles, humorous, inspirational, or instructive, dealing with all phases of athletics. Payment will be made upon acceptance."



# LITERARY MARKET TIPS

*Coronet*, 919 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, has upped its rate from \$100 to \$300 for each story or article, and to 10 cents a word for fillers of 400 words or less. Payment is made on acceptance. Oscar Dystel is editor-in-chief.

L. C. Page & Co., Publishers, 53 Beacon St., Boston, Mass., is in the market for lively, modern, well-written manuscripts on almost any subject, fiction or otherwise, that would interest the American public today and make a ready sale. Eve Grey, executive editor, adds, "We are particularly interested in building up new authors of promise and any subjects of high caliber and without taints of super-suggestiveness of any sort."

Volitant Publishing Co., 103 Park Ave., New York 17, is bringing out a new publication, *G. I. Joe*. The magazine will be devoted to the interests of servicemen, and the problems they will have as veterans. It will contain stories, articles of human interest, cartoons, and photos. Everything should have a G. I. or servicemen's angle. As many of the authors as possible should be servicemen, but non-servicemen may contribute if they know what they are writing about. Maximum length will be 2000 words, for both fiction and articles. Fillers also will be considered. Payment will be 2 cents a word on acceptance, with \$10 each on acceptance for cartoons, and \$5 for photos on publication.

*Progress Guide*, Pontiac Bldg., Chicago 5, reports that, due to paper shortages, it will be obliged to skip one or more issues during the balance of 1945. "Since we have a great deal of material on hand, we are not for the present purchasing any manuscripts," writes John J. Miller, editor-in-chief. Contributors are asked to advise whether they wish their manuscripts returned or held until they can be given consideration.

*Refrigeration Industry*, 812 Huron Rd., Cleveland 15, edited by T. T. Quinn, writes: "Our principal interest is in the commercial and industrial applications of refrigeration and air conditioning, although we will accept an occasional story on household refrigeration. Articles should point up either details of a specific installation, or should concern the application of refrigeration to a relatively new use. In either case articles should give all possible construction and installation details and, if available, the benefits which the new equipment makes possible as compared with equipment or methods formerly employed. Stories should run about 1500 words and should be fully illustrated with either photographs or sketches. In addition, we also are interested in short items of 500 to 1000 words on refrigeration maintenance methods, and shop equipment. Rates are 1 cent and up for copy, with photographs paid for at the going rates."

*Food Field Reporter*, 330 W. 42nd St., New York, is no longer interested in illustrated articles detailing merchandising and advertising methods used by chains, supers, and voluntaries, but articles on food

packaging are especially desired. Roy Miller is editor. Rate of payment is 8 cents a line for department items, 1 cent a word for features.

*Christian Home Life*, 8th & Cutter Sts., Cincinnati, pays ½ cent a word on acceptance for feature articles and short stories on various phases of home life, up to 1800 words. It is no longer interested in stories for little folks, brief articles for the home and nursery departments. Virginia Baley is editor.

*Electrical Dealer*, 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1, Hal Shanafield, managing editor, pays \$5 for each item used in its "Promotional Sidelights" department. These range from 150 to 350 words.

Barbara Snedeker Bates, now head of the illustrated story paper program of Presbyterian Publications, Witherspoon Bldg., Philadelphia 7, and fiction editor of the Westminster Press, has inaugurated no change in policy for *Gateway* and *Pioneer*, the teen-age papers, *Forward*, the paper for young people, and *Stories*, for primary children, but states that there are two special needs: good timely articles and short stories, including short-stories. "I wish," she says, "that writers would send in for information. We have a very helpful circular containing specific suggestions to writers." Aurelia Reigner is now editor of *Pioneer* and *Gateway*. Catherine Casey, of *Forward* and *Stories*. Miss Reigner has had varied experience in fields of teaching, medicine, and personnel work, with special training in journalism. Her hobby will make her particularly interested in articles on nature and bird study. Miss Casey has a background of camp, "Y", and Girl Reserve work.

*Drycleaning and Laundry Progress*, which has been published in Fort Worth, Texas, for the last 15 years, has been purchased by the H. L. Peace Publications, 344 Camp St., New Orleans 12, and moved to that address. The name will be changed to *Southern Laundry and Cleaner*, and the territory covered will extend as far north as St. Louis, and Baltimore. "The scope of the magazine will be broad, including administration, sales, advertising, delivery, plant operation, and personnel in the laundry and drycleaning fields," writes Newton C. Evans, editor. "It will be published monthly and deadline for editorial material is the 15th. Articles up to 2500 words can be used and pictures are needed urgently. Manuscripts will be reported on promptly. Rates are from ½ to 2 cents a word, payable the 10th of month following publication unless otherwise arranged. Photos and sketches will be paid for extra. No verse. Articles should be written from the Southern angle preferably, although good general matter may be used frequently."

*Air World Combined with Aircraft Age*. Columbia Publications, Inc., 241 Church St., New York 13, was erroneously listed among Trade Journals in our June Handy Market List. It should be under Aviation, as it uses fiction, as well as non-fiction, well-illustrated, from 2000 to 2500 words. Rates are from 2 cents up, on acceptance. L. Horace Silberkleit is editor.

## FLASH! FLASH! WRITERS WANTED!

Editors are begging for love stories and "Who-dun-its" (the detective story). With so many of the old-timers in War Service of some kind there never was such a golden opportunity for new writers.

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### CLEMENT WOOD

BOZENKILL  
DELANSON, N. Y.

*The Milk Salesman*, A. D. Walter, Inc., 5405 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh 6, Pa., is in the market for short articles not over two pages, and one page preferred, pertaining to milkman characters, specifically on delivery of milk to the home. Payment is \$5 a page of about 350 words. A few four-page stories of milkmen are used, also, for which \$25 is paid. A. D. Walter is publisher.

*Army Exchange Reporter*, 3110 Elm Ave., Baltimore 11, Md., free to members of Army Exchange Service, Navy Ship's Service, Marine Corps, and C. G. Post Exchanges, pays 1½ cents a word on acceptance for articles on Army PX's and Navy Ship's Service. These should be well illustrated. R. Coale Carll is editor.

*Navy Pictorial News*, *Army Pictorial News*, and *USMC Pictorial News*, all at Haddington Bldg., Norfolk 1, Va., are being edited now by Frank Sullivan.

*Tourist Court Journal*, 107 S. First St., Temple, Texas, pays ½ to 1 cent a word on acceptance, depending on quality, for material descriptive of the better type tourist courts, with photos, layout sketches of general court and individual units. Theme should be "What makes it tick?"

*Seventeen*, 11 W. 42nd St., New York, Jane Sherman, fiction editor, issues a plea to writers not to write down to its teen-age readers. "Although our readers range from 13 to 18 years," writes Miss Sherman, "they are wiser, we have learned, than most people like to admit, and we want to give them sound, well-written fiction. Boy-meets-girl, yes, since we cannot completely avoid it; but only if it has a new twist, new color, different characters. But in addition to that standby, we believe there are a great variety of relationships both familiar and interesting to our readers. There are the problems of the ugly duckling, for example; sister and brother relationships; boy and girl relationships to parents. We also like stories with foreign backgrounds; humorous stories; stories using some period of American history; mystery stories; and we could use a good 2- or 4-part serial with a mystery or romantic theme, payment for each depending on type, length, etc."

*The Modern Psychologist*, whose address "for the emergency only" is Box 1150, Joplin, Mo., although not publishing at this time, is interested in acquiring a stock pile of manuscripts against the day when paper is released. There may be some delay in reading, the management announces, but a manuscript once accepted will be paid for immediately. "Rates are low at the present time, and your manuscript may be held as long as a year before being published." All articles must be written from the You angle—what you can do to solve your problem, what you have done to solve a problem that has to do with some personal human relationship. Some success stories will be used, presented from the angle of what you can do, or what you can gain from the success life of some man or woman who has contributed something worthwhile to human relationship. "We are interested in the simple story, the work of some one person who, by helping others, has gained recognition—a story that the reader of *The Modern Psychologist* can apply to his own life."

*Pageant*, 1476 Broadway, New York 18, is paying \$60 a cartoon, for laughs with general appeal. Adolph Schus, cartoon editor, is holding open house every Wednesday for interviews. Out-of-towners will be given every consideration and returns will be prompt. *Pageant* is being published one issue every two months until October.

Grosset and Dunlap, 1107 Broadway, New York, has been purchased by The Book-of-the-Month Club Harper and Bros., Little, Brown & Co., Charles Scribner's Sons, and Random House. The business will be conducted as an entirely independent enterprise, under general policies set by the Board of Directors, in cooperation with a committee on planning and promotion, composed of executives of Random House. The participating firms' own staffs and programs will not be affected. They will continue to sell reprint rights to certain of their publications to various houses other than Grosset and Dunlap.

Dodd, Mead & Company, 432 4th Ave., New York 16, is sponsoring a 1946 Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship open to enrolled students of at least two years' standing in an American or Canadian college or university. The fellowship is being granted for the writing of a novel. Its main purpose is to provide opportunity to young writers who have not previously had professional experience. Thus, only those undergraduate students who are candidates for a bachelor's degree and graduate students in residence who are candidates for a master's degree shall be eligible to submit projects. Amount of the award is \$1500, payable quarterly or monthly, as the winner wishes, for the term of one year, commencing July 1, 1946. All applications and projects must be sent to the publisher by April 1, 1946. Application blanks may be secured on request.

*Smiles*, 215 Fourth Ave., New York 3, N. Y., writes T. R. Hecker, editor, "is now paying at the rate of 2½ to 3c per word, on acceptance, for humorous articles. *Smiles* uses any kind of sustained humor carrying enough gags to make the copy funny all the way through. It can be in any form—articles, short-shorts, one-act plays, dialogue, etc.—and the style can be editorial, journalistic, fictional, or any other sort you'll find in any magazine, book or newspaper, just so long as it's funny. "We like screwball copy, sophisticated humor (if clean), satire—even slapstick, if it's a cut above average. Our best length is 800 to 1000 words, but any length will be considered. We have to buy four months ahead of publication, so topics should be selected that will be timely after four months. Payment for this copy runs from 2½ to 3 cents per word on acceptance."

*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, will award \$5000 for the best short stories submitted before December 3, 1945. Length—5000 to 10,000 words. Christopher Morley, Howard Haycraft, and Ellery Queen will be the judges. Interested readers should write the magazine for complete official rules.

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A BOOK OF WAYSIDE FRUITS, by Margaret McKenny and Edith Johnston. The Macmillan Co. Cloth, 78 pp., \$2.50.

With this book in his library, the writer, though he has little knowledge of the world of nature, can be assured of accuracy of detail in describing the common roadside bushes and trees and plants that at their harvest time brighten the landscape with colorful fruits and berries. Seasons, localities, birds attracted, all are accurately given. The fruits are divided into three classifications—Early Summer, Mid-Summer, Autumn—and every wayside fruit so accurately described is beautifully illustrated by Mrs. Johnston. The book is a companion volume to "A Book of Wild Flowers" and "A Book of Garden Flowers," by the same writer and artist.

## Mostly Personal

(Continued from Page 3)

Richard Tooker, author of "Writing For a Living," asks us to correct two statements in the review which appeared in our May issue. Our reviewer put in quotes the statement, "I can go fishing any time I want to." Mr. Tooker says his book does not contain the sentence, also objects to "Arizonans" in the sentence, "Dick Tooker owns five suits of clothes, so that Arizonans will not question his literary ability." Mr. Tooker states that he made no reference to Arizona in his discussion of a writer's (and his own) wardrobe, points out that visitors from many states come to Phoenix.

**POETS:** Send self-addressed stamped envelope for 1945 PRIZE PROGRAM: Quarterly prizes, \$25; Poetry Book Contest, etc. You will receive also description of HELP YOURSELF HAND-BOOKS (\$1 each) containing 999 PLACES TO SEND POEMS:

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## COLLABORATION IN FACTUAL WRITING

By CELIA DARLINGTON

In factual writing there are three stages in the approach to the finished work: first, the idea; second, the facts; third, the presentation. In each of these stages, two people, practising the right kind of teamwork, can do better than one. Since there is always a tangible basis of fact in such writing, collaboration is easier than in the creative field.

To illustrate from my own experience: For a long time I had wanted to be a writer, but I lacked confidence. Consequently, I did not write enough, and what I did write was not salable. Then I had the good fortune to meet a collaborator whose talents are complementary to mine. I like words, phrases, sentences; he likes ideas with a new twist, curious and interesting information.

Luckily we were able to get together on a common project, writing articles on yachting subjects. For these he provides much of the technical background. I never need to worry about mistakes in facts, and this has done much towards building up my confidence. He, on the other hand, had never written an article because, while he had both technical background and ideas, he didn't have the requisite interest in style, or the technical writing know-how. He couldn't type, for instance. Besides being interested in English, I earn my living as a secretary, so that when we joined forces his problems were solved as well as mine.

Having decided to team up in the writing game, we devoted our first meeting to jotting down a list of likely subjects. This is certainly one time when two heads are better than one. Two separate trains of association along the same line will bring up a remarkable number of ideas, and a well-kept subject list never fails as a starter when inspiration is slow.

Now that we had a choice of subjects, how to develop them? I believe that this is the most dangerous moment in collaboration, and that the best results will be obtained if the partnership dissolves for a while to get together later. Two people may stimulate each other when they are searching for ideas, but when these ideas are being developed they will simply get each other off the track. For this reason we do not usually publish articles under our joint names. The one who develops the idea takes the credit. The other helps along the way.

After we have decided on a subject, if it is my article, I write a rough draft. Then we meet and go over it together, and my collaborator makes any contributions he wishes, hashing over my thoughts with me. We find that this leads to a much more complete treatment of any subject than either of us could work out alone. Then I type my final copy, feeling free, since this is my article after all, to reject any changes or make any amendments I desire.

If my partner is sponsoring the article, the system is much the same, except that he finds his greatest freedom in dictation. He talks easily and naturally, and I am able to catch what he really wants to say. I type the first draft, making any changes or additions that seem good to me as I go along. We inspect the copy together and make corrections, after

(Continued on Page 22)



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(Continued from Page 20)

which I type the final version without interfering. After all, this is *his* article.

And that is one way to avoid the biggest pitfall in collaboration. Any writer, if he's human, wants his work to be his own, and the credit for it to be his, too. We've never had an argument about a manuscript, because we've kept out of each other's hair at crucial moments, only contributing help when it was wanted.

Neither of us had ever sold a manuscript before, but our first two articles written by the method described above clicked with the first market we tried. Since then, between us we've had about forty articles on the stands in the last few months.

Is collaboration responsible? Rather, I'd say, the benefits accruing from collaboration. It is obvious that two writers cannot successfully write together unless each partner can stand on his own feet. But the benefits of collaboration, in bolstering up confidence, stimulating production, and providing help where it is needed, may, if the right people get together, mean for each partner the final step from rejections to sales.

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## Vereen Bell

A. & J.:

I noticed the reference to Vereen Bell in the article by Frederic Litten in the March A and J. It was a loss to another world besides the literary when he lost his life in the sea. He lived in Thomasville, Georgia, and all the sportsmen . . . the men with dogs and guns . . . knew him and liked him. He had great charm, and those like myself who had only a slight acquaintance with him enjoyed his open personality and courtesy.

There was a little log cabin in the woods about a mile from his house, where he used to go off by himself to write. He wrote the famous "Swamp Water" there, and I remember his talking about getting "stuck" in the middle of the story for some months. At the time when he began work on it again, his son, Vereen, Jr., was having a bad time with typhoid, that hits us now and again in the South still. I asked him if he didn't have great difficulty going back into a book when he quit in a bad spot. He said no, that he had no trouble at all. His custom was to start several thousand words back and read through until he had the feel of the thing again. The snarl would smooth out as he read.

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That was a highly entertaining article by Sewell Peaslee Wright, every word of it true, which you published several months ago—about why writers don't write. Much of it fits my own case.

However, I can give an additional reason why this writer doesn't write on at least one day each month. That is the day A. & J. arrives, almost invariably in Thursday morning's mail. No matter what masterpiece I have planned to hammer out that morning, everything stops till I look over the market tips, the lists of publishers and magazines, and note any newcomers or the passing of any old-timers in the publishing field. And of course, there are all those articles to read. So, on the day that A. & J. comes, I get mighty little or nothing done.

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